1: Conzemius M-4, 5 (1921) 1932
SA15 Mosquito SA15

BETROTHAL AND TRIAL MARRIAGE.—The children are sometimes engaged by their respective parents while still in early infancy, even at the age of 5 or 6 years. The young boy makes his fiancée and her parents a small present, and helps them occasionally in their work. When she arrives at the age of puberty (about 10 years) he takes her as his wife. The man is considered a member of his wife's family and he goes to live in the house of his parents-in-law. When the family enlarges he will build a house of his own near by. Perhaps a misunderstanding of the above facts has led M. W. (309) to state that a system of trial marriage existed in those days among the Miskito. According to this author the probationary period lasted about two years, at the end of which a feast was prepared and then the union was considered legitimate, there being no ceremony. To-day the young man marries generally at the age of from 16 to 18, the girl at about 12.

WEDDING.—Exquemelin (Engl. edit.: 253; French edit.: II, 267–268) gives the following account of the marriage ceremony of the Miskito during the latter part of the seventeenth century. The father, after assuring himself that the lover was an expert hunter and fisher, ordered his daughter to bring a calabash of a beverage prepared from pineapples and honey; the suitor drank one-half of the contents and then tendered the remainder to his future wife to drink. According to this same author the buccaneers had the habit of buying a Miskito woman for a knife, ax, or hatchet, upon their arrival at Cabo Gracias a Dios. She was obliged to remain with him during the time he stayed at the settlement and to supply him with the products of the plantation, while he went out hunting and fishing. (Exquemelin, Engl. edit.: 249).

Among the Sumu the nuptial ceremony is performed by an elderly man who first gives the couple a long talk. Then the two aspirants join the thumb of the right hand, whereupon he separates their hands by cutting through with his own hand. There is no record of the chiefs having possessed the *jus primæ noctis* as appears to have been the case with the Chorotega (Orotiña) of the Pacific coast of Nicaragua and Costa Rica. Marriage with other tribes was not permitted in former days by the Sumu, and the children of strangers were killed. This accounts for the fact that the Sumu have kept themselves free from foreign admixtures, whereas the Miskito intermarry with all races and absorb everything. The Sumu are very jealous of their wives and until recent times did not allow them to converse with strangers.

MOTHER-IN-LAW TABOO.—As soon as the marriage ceremony has taken place the young Sumu husband must not speak any more to his mother-in-law, nor even look at her. When he is at home she remains in her own apartment, which is separated from the remainder